

Marshfield Energy Committee Act 174 subcommittee 2018-04-09
In attendance: Nick Seifert, Anne Miller, Eric Vorwald, Rich Phillips

Eric discussed ensuring that the Energy Plan is incorporated into the town plan. TBD on exactly how this is incorporated.

Eric suggested considering adding language to the town plan to explicitly reference the energy plan. This may not be possible without actually having the energy plan available.

Eric suggested setting an appropriate number of goals or actions which might get accomplished, rather than having an exhaustive list with things which can't get done. The actions or goals should be a mix of aspirational and also things which can be accomplished or influenced.

Nick asked how the increased electrical use from the move towards e.g. heat pumps has been looked at statewide in terms of the cost and use of electricity. Eric says this has been generally modeled, and the assumption is there are a lot of new renewables coming online to increase the supply.

Becky asked about the issue of approximately 50% of thermal coming from wood, yet the goal is only for 1 new efficient woodstove by 2025. Eric's general advice was not to recalculate the goal for e.g. efficient woodstoves, but discuss what we want to do in the narrative section which provides context. I.e. include the tables as is, but then discuss a more realistic goal.

Anne asked how to handle Marshfield residents who are on Washington Electric, and the fact that they are already 100% renewable, and so those residents don't have an economic incentive to add any solar. Eric isn't exactly sure how to handle this. Certainly it should be included in the narrative discussion about energy. This is a policy that WEC has, but the bigger point is that Marshfield shouldn't put in place regulations that limit generation.

Becky asked how to turn a particular target (e.g. 10,000 MWh generation/year by 2050) and turn this into actual actions. Eric pointed out that the map data can then be used to specify e.g. "here is where we want solar development", or "here is where we don't".

Anne asked if it is possible to write regulations which allow and prefer e.g. solar panels around the edge of a pasture/field, but to exclude other types of development around the edges. Eric thought this was possible, and OK.

Becky asked a question that it sounds like Eric is saying the work he suggests is more related to the zoning regulations. Eric agrees, and suggests that there needs to be some review of the zoning regulations to ensure that there are none which contradict or interfere with what the Energy Plan is trying to do.

Nick asked about what is meant by "weatherization" in table 1E. Eric thought this was meant to indicate that weatherization efforts would be improving the efficiency of the existing structure.

He pointed us to the “Guidance for Municipal Enhanced Energy Planning Standards” document as a place where there is a good amount of guidance on specific actions. Eric also said for sure the intent was that the current new building energy standards would be enforced (new construction).

Nick asked about creating custom maps. Eric said the [VCGI resource](#) is the best bet for quick evaluation. Also, if we need specific percentages or numbers calculated based on a particular combination of layers, he can do that for us.

Eric mentioned that the generation does not have to be used in Marshfield, it can go elsewhere. If a generation facility is built in the municipality, that counts.

Nick asked if any movement has been made on what “substantial deference” actually gets a municipality. Eric was not aware of anyone testing this to clarify what this means.

Eric mentioned that at least two towns now have plans which achieve this substantial deference: Highgate and Richford. Their plans may be on their town websites, or on the NorthWest regional planning commission. Eric found the Highgate plan online. Richford is also online at the NRPC site.

Eric also mentioned that substantial deference can be used to help encourage siting of renewables. E.g. trying to get a particular area developed.

Eric said he would provide the municipal data as a word document for easier copy/paste.

Nick asked about general structure and about mixing the narrative and data/tables, or else separating them into separate sections. Eric thought that mixing the tables with the narrative is probably a better approach for reading it. It is OK to contradict the data in the tables directly below them in the narrative section and to state the goals.

Becky asked about assumptions about population growth/change. Eric thinks this is in the “Dashboard Data Assumptions and Methodologies” document that’s part of the Community Energy Dashboard website: <https://www.vtenergydashboard.org/my-community/marshfield/progress>

Eric also mentioned that the CVRPC plan has a lot of info in the appendices and elsewhere in the document. The current draft is here: <http://centralvtplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Central-Vermont-Regional-Energy-Plan-02.13.2018-Public-Hearing-Draft-Reduced.pdf>

The next subcommittee meeting will be in 2 weeks, 4/23, at 6:30pm. Eric is unable to make that. Becky suggested having a session with Eric to work on the mapping, as that will be key for the Energy section.